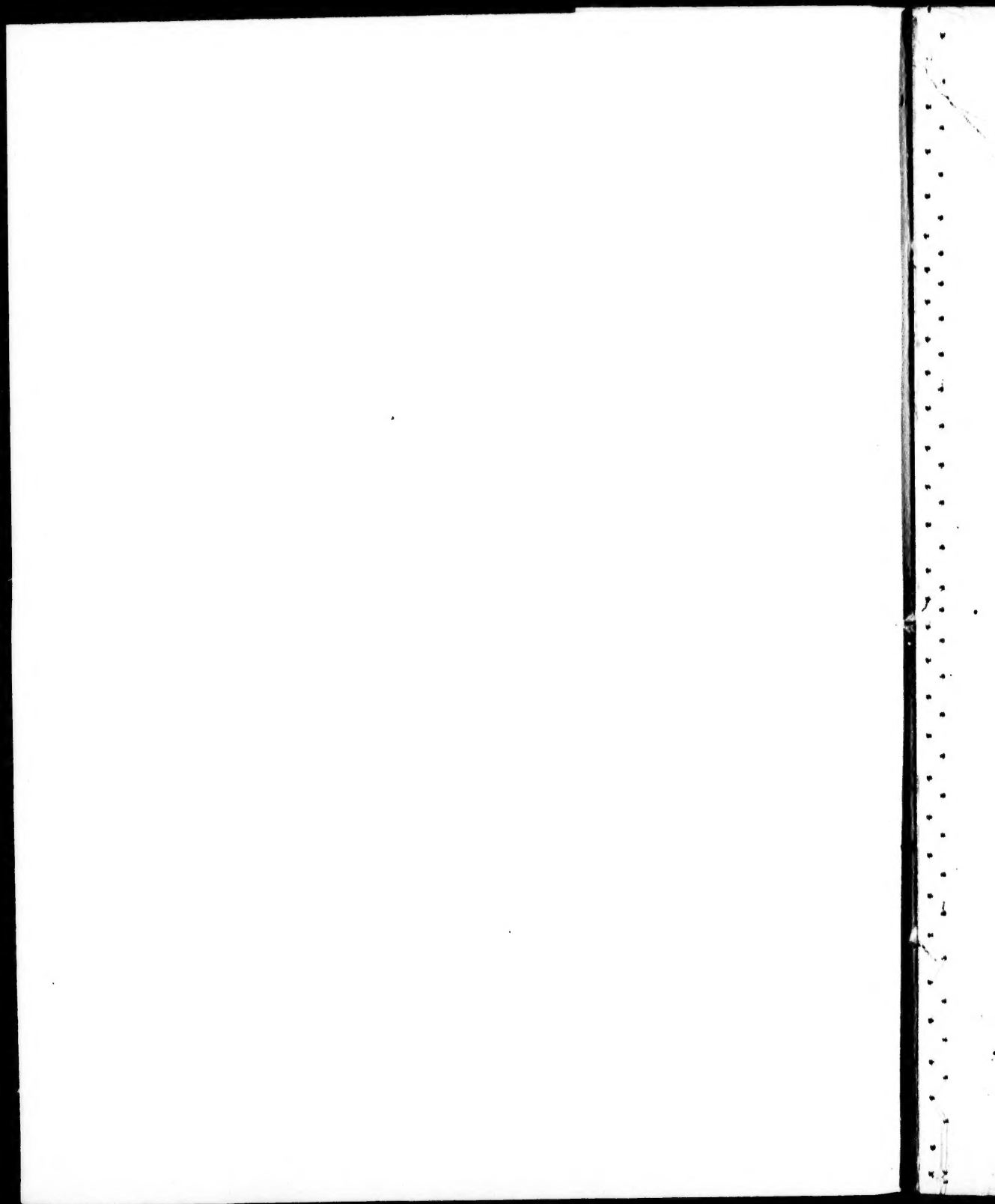




SERMONS,

DELIVERED ON THE 20th OF AUGUST, 1813,

THE DAY

RECOMMENDED

BY THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR

Public Humiliation and Prayer.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PROPRIETY OF PREACHING OCCASIONALLY

ON

Political Subjects.

BY JONATHAN FRENCH,

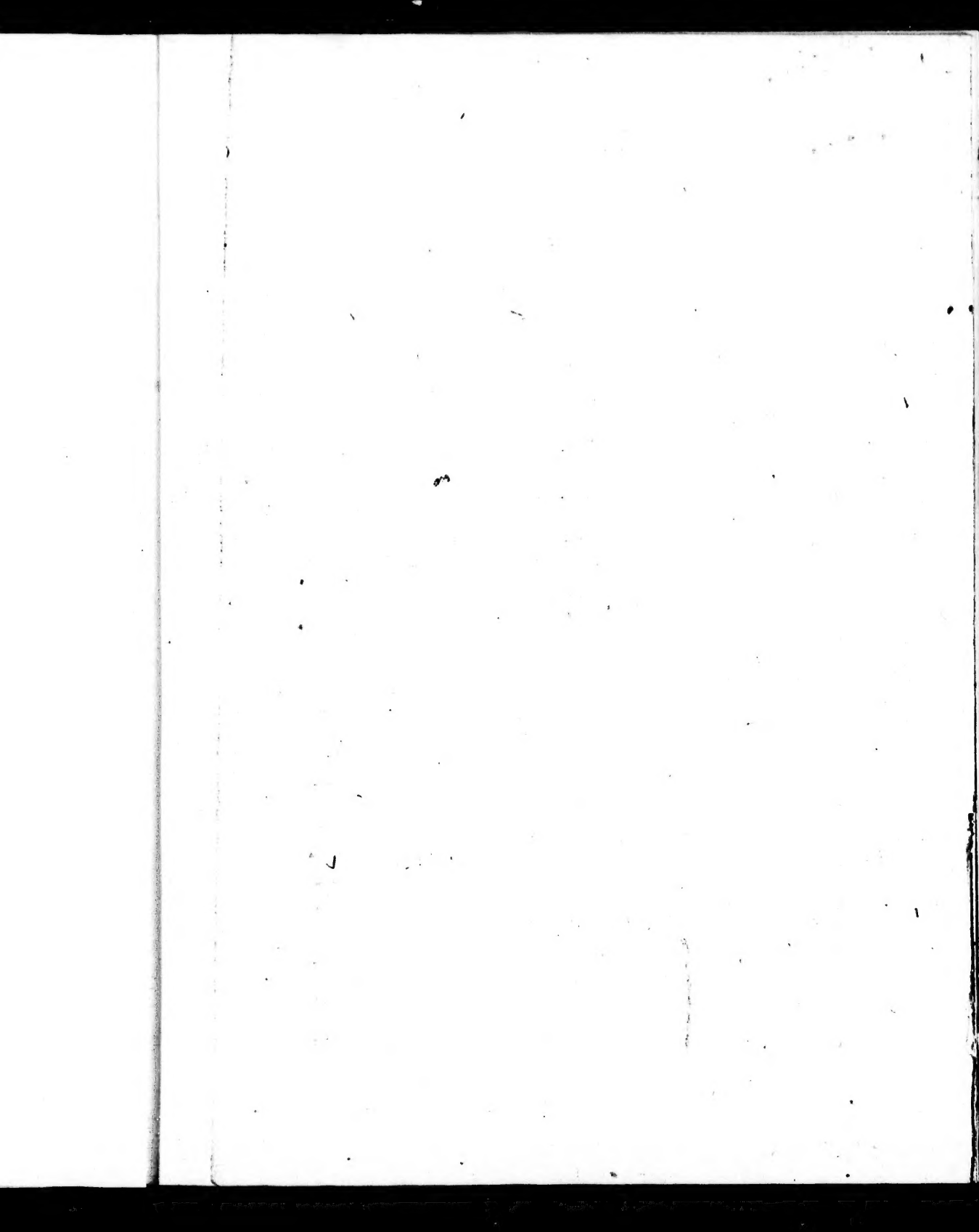
Minister of the Church in North-Hampton, N. H.

EXETER:

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1812
(1)



SERMON.

ii. SAMUEL xxiv. 14.

And David said unto God, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of men.

DAVID's sin, in causing Israel to be numbered, probably consisted in pride, vanity and ambition. When he was afterward humbled under the mighty hand of God, like a true penitent, being more ready to condemn himself than others, he "spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel, that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, (meaning the people) what have they done?" The people, however, were far from being so guiltless as David supposed. Their sins were the primary occasion of the judgment, that fell upon them. In the beginning of the chapter it is said, "again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah." God took off restraint, and suffered such wrong passions as were working in David's heart, to break out into act; left him to the guidance of those wrong passions, which Satan tempted him to indulge. That in this sense God moved David is evident from 1 Chron. 21 ch. "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." They had offended the Lord, by following Absalom who "stole the hearts of the men of Israel;" and afterward by following "a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri;" and by otherwise abusing the great prosperity which they had enjoyed. Although visited with a three years famine, they did not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. He therefore suffered the pride, ambition and vanity of their ruler, which also deserved punishment, to break forth into a measure, which brought their case to a crisis, and ripened him and them for severe and humiliating chastisement. He suffered David to number Israel. "Because this was done without any color of necessity, and out of mere ostentation and carnal confidence, as David's own conscience told him,"* God was displeased with this thing, and smote Israel. David's heart indeed smote him, after he had done this, and he

* Pool.

confessed his sin unto God, and "though the Lord would forgive his sin on repentance, yet, as it was a public offence, he would correct it in a public manner, by destroying his subjects before his eyes."* "The word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him and said unto him, shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."

The direction, or permission of God is to be acknowledged in all the calamities which men experience. "Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" The Psalmist viewing Saul and his attendants, instrumentally, as the sword and hand of God, wherewith he chastised others, prays in the 17th psalm, "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword, from men, which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life." But when there is evil in the city, the wickedness of men has procured it. The overruling providence of God is to be acknowledged in all events; but there is a plain distinction between his committing and his suffering providence. David, therefore, made a very just distinction in the text, between falling into the hand of God and falling into the hand of man. He chose to endure the immediate chastisements of God, whose mercies are great, rather than such calamities as men are instrumental of inflicting; for he knew, that man, when let loose upon his brother man, and actuated by hostile passions, becomes a monster more outrageous and relentless, than the beasts of the desert. The ferocity of man, when his passions are unrestrained, is attested by the horrid events of every age. The ancient historian, Plutarch, says, and adduces melancholy instances which prove, "that no beast is more savage, than man, when possessed of power equal to his passions." In view of the horrid massacre of the Shechemites, with what abhorrence of the nature and dire effects of the ungoverned passions of man, did the good old patriarch, Jacob, exclaim concerning the fruit of his own body, his own sons, Simeon and Levi, "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will they digged down a

wall. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce and their wrath for it was cruel."

According to the distinction of the text, persons may be said to fall into the hands of God, when famine, pestilence, lightning, volcanoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, or any other immediate executioners of divine justice, are commissioned against them. As instances, I might mention the famines and pestilences, which Israel often experienced. Among events of modern times, I might mention the scarcity in Scotland and Ireland, the famine in Paris, and diverse other parts of France, and the scarcity in Britain and Poland. I might mention the torrent from the mountains, which swept away 2000 persons in Spain. I might mention the desolating earthquakes at Lima, Callao, Lisbon, Cuba and many other places. I might mention the plague, which, within less than half a century, raged in Smyrna, Tunis and Egypt. To come to our own times and country, I might mention the spotted fever of recent date, and the malignant pestilential fever, which a few years ago raged in several of our sea-ports, and of which about 5000 died in the city of Philadelphia. "We know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10. 30, 31. But David considered falling immediately into the hand of man, as the most deplorable of calamities. Great are the mercies of a just and avenging God; but "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Prov. 12. 10.

Persons may be said to fall into the hand of a man, when reduced to a state of servitude, or imprisonment, by those, with whom they were at peace. Such was the case of some, mentioned in the bible, and to come to our own times, such is the case of those of our seamen, who have been "impressed on board British vessels;"* and also of such of our seamen, as have been "seized

* Much has been said respecting the impressment of American seamen, as one of the great causes for the present war. Mr. Foster in his letter of June 1, 1812, to Mr. Monroe says, "I have it in charge to repeat to you, Sir, for the information of your government, that the government of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent will continue to give the most positive orders against the detention of American citizens on board his Majesty's ships; and that no difficulties, beyond what are requisite for clearly ascertaining the national character of individuals, whose cases are brought before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, will be interposed to prevent or delay their immediate discharge." The impressment of our seamen is a wrong, which ought to be redressed, not palliated. But the whole number of our impressed seamen according to the most lengthened list ever pretended by the advocates for the present war, is very small indeed, compared with the number of persons held in absolute slavery, even in the single state of Virginia. The case of the southern

by French cruizers, and manacled and confined in French prisons."

Persons fall into the hand of man, when reduced to a state of slavery. We find no mention of slaves before the deluge; but of those in a state of slavery afterward we read often in scripture; as we do in various histories ancient and modern. The Romans had many slaves, over whom they held the power of life and death. The Helots were made slaves by the Spartans, treated in a barbarous manner, and often murdered without any shew of justice. In modern times, the Indians of south America were reduced to the most abject servitude by the Spaniards, and compelled to wade out their wretched lives in dismal mines, to enrich their unrighteous subjugators, and cruel oppressors. I might mention the abused negroes in south America and the West-India islands. But to come nearer home, justice and regard to truth demand, that I mention a fact so disgraceful to my country, as the slavery of the people of color, in this land of boasted liberty, and that in some of the western and southern states thousands and thousands are held by the great ones of the land in toilsome bondage, administering to the pride, wealth and influence of their lordly masters.*

Persons may be said to fall into the hand of man, when they are exposed to the fury of treacherous men, of lawless mobs, or of an unrestrained and unprincipled soldiery. As instances, I might mention the treacherous massacre of the Shechemites by the sons of Jacob (Gen. 34 chap.); and the murder of the sons of Jerubbaal, by Abimelech, who hired vain and light persons, which followed him, and he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew of his brethren three score and ten persons. Judg. 9 ch. Among events of latter times, I might mention "the barbarous massacres of France in the 16th century, in which the

slaves is hopeless, but it is the opinion of not a few among our most patriotic and best informed men, that the subject of *impressment* might have been honorably adjusted without war. On this subject our Representative, Mr. Sullivan says, "We have been told that negotiation had been tried until it had become hopeless. Is this true? Documents in the office of the Secretary of State prove that it is not true." He says further, "Will war procure their release? Who is so blind as not to see that if war should continue for five, ten, or twenty years our unfortunate countrymen will be detained on board British Ships; and that hundreds and thousands will be added to the number?"—*Mr. Sullivan's Speech at the Rockingham Convention of the Friends of Peace.*

* According to the census of 1810 there were in Orl. and Miss. 51,748 slaves. Geor. 105,218. S. Caro. 196,365. E. and W. Tenn. 44,535. N. Car. 168,824. Ken. 80,561. Virg. 592,518. Maryl. 111,502. In N. York, 15,017. N. Jer. 10,851. Del. 4,177. Con. 810. R. Isl. 108. In Ohio, Vermont, Massachusetts and N. Hampshire none.

very hangmen refused obedience to the cruel mandates of the French Monarch, saying they were legal officers and only executed those the laws condemned. Yet history bears testimony that the soldiers performed the office, which the hangman refused."*

I might mention the massacre in Ireland in 1640, when 40,000 English protestants were killed. Coming to these times, I might mention the barbarities inflicted, and murder committed by the late lawless mob at Baltimore, an outrage of small extent compared with the former; but an outrage exceedingly aggravated, when it is considered that it was committed in our land of liberty, whose excellent constitutions and laws engage *security to the property and persons, the rights and liberties of the people.*

When David said, Let me not fall into the hand of man, he specially referred to the destructive effects of WAR, more terrible in his estimation, than famine or pestilence. Was among the sons of men could judge more accurately of war than David? He had been conversant with its tremendous scenes. His ears had been accustomed to "the confused noise of the warrior," and his eyes to the shocking sight of "garments rolled in blood." He was not a stranger either to successful, or unsuccessful war. He was acquainted with the evils incident to it, in its diversified forms and events. In view of the complicated miseries, inflicted by the hands of unrelenting men, he shrank from the calamities of war, rather than from "the pestilence, that walketh in darkness, or the destruction, that wasteth at noon day," when from the immediate hand of God. From our context it appears, that if Israel had been involved in war, it would on their part have been unsuccessful; but the words imply, that it would have been so only three months; during that time, they were to flee before their pursuing enemies, whose destroying sword would overtake them.

In general, the events of war are various. On one side at least its calamities fall with peculiar weight, and usually on both its evils are severe and extensive.

A painful subject, *the evils of war*, is now applicable to us, in view of the judgments, which have fallen and are falling on our country.

The great expense of treasure which war occasions, is comparatively a small part of the waste and evil, which it brings. What is the mere expense of war, to "the sufferings, and miserable deaths of such multitudes of human creatures, though

* Quincy's observations on the act of parliament commonly called the Boston port bill, with thoughts on civil society, &c. published in 1774, from which several quotations in these sermons are taken.

every one of them is a murder committed by the authors of this calamity; besides the innumerable distresses of relations and friends, the devastations, inhumanities, and wickednesses of every kind, which never fail to be its attendants."* The expense of war, though small, compared with some of its other evils, is great in itself considered; for war directly tends to drain the resources of a country and impoverish its inhabitants. The sums necessary for the payment of armies, for subsistence, military stores, &c. swell the national expenses. War always interrupts and sometimes nearly destroys commerce, and thus dries up a fountain of revenue. To carry on war, burdensome taxes either directly, or indirectly under the name of duties, are laid upon the people. Such burdens are more grievous to be born, because war to such a degree checks, stagnates, and palsies commerce, merchandize, trade and almost all kinds of business, which flourish in times of peace, that there is less encouragement to enterprise, and less ability to meet increasing expenses. To form expensive armies, families are often put to great inconveniences, straits, and difficulties. Husbands or other relations, on whom families depend, are taken from their homes, from labors by which they were contributing to the comfort and improving the circumstances of their families; by which they were useful to those around them, and thus contributing to the public prosperity. This evil of war, its great expense, appears increased and aggravated, when we consider not only the vast amount necessary to carry on a war, but also the private and public loss, which is occasioned by such numbers being taken from the peaceful and useful employments of private life. If wars for conquest sometimes increase the power and wealth of the greedy and ambitious tyrants who wage them, in most cases they waste the substance, and diminish the prosperity of nations.

Look back to the last war in this country, and, a few excepted, did not the soldiery in general serve a hard service, and return, such as survived to return, empty as they went?

By war the public becomes involved in debts, from which it requires years and years of peace to recover, and which must at last be paid by further burdens laid upon the people. If we would count the cost, let us view some of the expenses of the war, in which these states were formerly involved with Great-Britain. According to the American edition of Encyclopedia published in 1790, "the cost to Great-Britain is moderately computed at 115,654,914 £. & the additional annual burthen by it, at 4,557,575 £. since January 1775. I do not recollect having seen any estimate of the whole expense of the war to these United States. But I

* Secker.

have seen a statement of the debts, in which this country was involved at the close of the war, so far as they could be then ascertained. In the address of Congress to the States in 1783, the United States debts were estimated at 42,000,375 dollars, and the annual interest at 2,415,956 dollars.*

Let us turn from the expenses to view some other evils of war.

A state of war is unfavorable to the promotion of useful knowledge. Amid the privations and burthens, the terrors and distresses of war, the advancement of science and the peaceful arts is impeded. By war the beautiful works both of nature and art are demolished. The pleasant groves and fertile fields are laid waste, the humble dwelling once the abode of contentment and peace, together with the stately edifice, and the temple of the Most High, the God of peace, are swept away by war, that "*besom of destruction*."

War produces private and public misery. Its evils often fall heavy, sometimes heaviest on the common people, even though they do not desire it. "Private soldiers, said Tiberius Gracchus, fight and die to advance the wealth and luxury of the great." War is sometimes carried into peaceful territories, and pours desolation on those, who have wished no ill and inflicted no injuries on their murderers.

When we consider the evils of maritime war, the principles and effects of *privateering* cannot escape our notice. This kind of warfare seems to be aimed chiefly at the private property of defenceless, and perhaps peaceably disposed individuals. If this kind of warfare is allowed by the law of nations, does it seem consistent with the law of love, prescribed by Him, who judgeth among the nations? Does it seem consistent with that christian precept, "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets?" Who can doubt the demoralizing effects of a kind of warfare, whose aim is booty, and which tends to reconcile and habituate those who are engaged in it, to acts of plunder as well as scenes of carnage? Would you view the miseries of naval war in its more gigantic forms? See the embattled ships, hear the reiterated roaring of their cannon, think of the mangled limbs of your fellow creatures, carried away to satiate the monsters of the deep; observe the stricken colors, and the wretched captives, the halt, the maimed and mangled, crowded in close confinement, amid the shouts of their victors!—Or see the shivered, but unyielding flag

* According to the statement in Blodget's *Economica* the public debt of the United States in 1791 was principal and interest 76,781,953 dolls. and 76 cents. In Mr. Gallatin's answer of Jan. 10, 1812 to the chairman of the committee of ways and means, it is stated, that "the annual interest on the existing debt amounts to 2,220,000 dolls."

following its sinking defenders!—Or behold the ship on fire, hear the tremendous explosion of the bursting powder room, scattering to the winds and waves the helpless crew—and hurrying their immortal souls into eternity. Would you view the evils of maritime war, inflicted on the defenceless seaboard of a country? Observe the consternation and distress of the inhabitants on the approach of frigates and ships of war; behold towns and cities falling in ruin, or enveloped in flame, and crowds of disconsolate inhabitants, flying in wild dismay from the horrid scene of carnage and desolation!

Consider the ill effects of war concerning those, who form the land armies. If soldiers survive the shock of battle, not only their health, but their moral principles and habits are endangered by the great change in their mode of life. Many, it is to be feared, having changed their ordinary and peaceful occupations for varying and tumultuous scenes, the mixed society, the alternate idleness and fatigues of the camp, will form such principles and habits as will unfit them for returning again to sober and regular employments. If some of sound and established principles and habits maintain their integrity, an army must be allowed to be “an ill nursery for young men,” a situation of temptations and of danger to the morals and characters of such as are not well established in the ways of virtue, and in which even such are exposed to dangerous temptations.

The demoralizing effects of war are generally if not universally acknowledged. Aged persons observe, and I believe it is generally allowed, that increasing violations of the sabbath and disregard to public worship are among the evils, which to this time are felt, and are to be traced as effects of a state of war, when it was last experienced in this country. Necessity was then urged for marching troops, conveying intelligence, transporting military stores, &c. Though necessity at that time, the practice of using the sabbath as a common day having become customary, laws have since been found ineffectual to restrain, even where there has been religious principle enough to make laws for that purpose. On every sabbath we notice these things. Even our public stages, if not authorized and directed, seem statedly from morning to night to trample on God’s holy day unrebuked. The violation of the sabbath is one of the many demoralizing effects of war, I name this particularly because so evident to us all.

“War not only takes off the public attention from domestic concerns, furnishes occasion for abuses, obstructs the remedy of inconveniences, till they grow inveterate and hard to cure; in short, disorders and unhinges the whole system of civil affairs; but war is also a state of no less wickedness than calamity and terror. Whenever it breaks out, one side, at least, must have acted

grievously contrary to humanity and justice ; contrary too, in all likelihood, to solemn treaties ; and that from no better motives, than little resentments, groundless or distant fears, eagerness of gaining unnecessary advantages, restless ambition, false glory, or wantonness of power. To such detestable idols are whole armies and nations deliberately sacrificed ; though every suffering, thus caused is a heinous crime, and every death a murder. Nor will the side, which at first is more innocent, fail in the progress to be guilty of many shocking transgressions in common with the other. The whole body of a people are apt to grow uncharitable, un pitying, implacable ; and the soldiery will plunge of course into cruelty, rapine, profaneness, lewdness and intemperance.*

War diminishes the population of a country. What multitudes did war devour in ancient times. We read of an hundred and twenty thousand men killed in one day ; and at another time of five hundred thousand slain in one battle. In modern warfare no single battle has effected such amazing carnage. But "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood." According to the accounts, which I have seen of the former war between this country and Great Britain, theirs was the greater loss of treasure, ours the greater loss of lives. Great Britain, says Dr. Ramsay, wasted the lives of at least 50,000 of her subjects. In the Encyclopedia it is said, "The States of America, according to authentic estimates, lost by the sword and in prison near 80,000 men."

I have not mentioned the wasting diseases of the camp, and the infectious air of hospitals, notwithstanding the best surgical skill, and most humane attentions, which the circumstances of an army will admit. And the tongue falters, while it speaks of the carnage and woes of the "day of battle and war ;" the horrid din and roar of arms ; the blood stained field ; the corpses of the slain ; the cries of the wounded ; the groans of the dying !—Nor can I attempt to describe the deep and continual "grief of surviving relations and friends !"—But this is not all. Souls are hurried in a moment from the heat of battle, when, as there is reason to believe, least conscious of the awful realities which await them, into a world of retribution ! "Said an eminent Puritan in his sermon preached in this country more than 160 years ago, a day of battle is a day of harvest for the devil !"

That there have been many pious soldiers we have no reason to doubt ; but we have reason to believe, that many, who engage in war, do it notwithstanding all its dangers, without any just concern for their eternal peace.

* Secker.

"War tends to destroy all that prosperity which peace tends to produce. War diminishes the numbers and wastes the wealth of nations. War obstructs the progress of science and destroys the works of ages. War corrupts the hearts and lives of men, and wounds the interests of religion and morality. War spreads a general gloom over the beautiful face of nature ; disturbs the peace and destroys the hopes of families, and pierces the bosoms of old and young with the keenest anguish and distress. It is impossible to paint the horrors of war, and all its attendant miseries. It will appear in its truest light in contrast with the blessings of peace. And to view it in this dreadful light, we need only turn our eyes to Europe. It has there spilt the blood of millions. It has there trampled upon all laws human and divine. It has there laid waste the labors and wisdom of ages. It has there spread ignorance, infidelity, vice and misery, through a large portion of the globe. In a word, war is the calamity of calamities, and the greatest of all natural and national evils."*

If war is so great an evil, it ought not to be undertaken without the *clearest cause, without reasons every way adequate and sufficient to justify it.* In view of its evils, David wisely decided against war, rather than other desolating judgments.

If David had fallen into the hand of man, some hope in his case would still have remained. He had reason to expect the war would be of short continuance, yet he considered it a more dreadful judgment, than famine or pestilence. How then ought our minds to be solemnized, when we consider, that not even a choice of judgments is offered to us ; that we have no promise of a speedy termination of the war in which we are involved ; that no finite being can answer the anxious inquiry, When shall the end be ?

May the God of peace have mercy upon us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

* *Emmons.*

SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY iv. 30, 31.

When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them.

THIS chapter begins with earnest exhortations to obey God. It proceeds with prophetic warnings of the consequences of disobedience, and with tenders of mercy to the sincerely penitent. In foresight of Israel's backslidings and disobedience and of the calamities, which they would thus bring upon themselves, a merciful, though avenging God, pointed out to them in the text the only way of duty and of hope in such a time; turn to the Lord thy God and be obedient unto his voice; comprising in this short sentence their duty to themselves, their country and their God.

The pious among the Jews esteemed this passage exceedingly precious. In a time of great distress, when Ahasuerus had been persuaded to issue a decree, threatening the ruin of the Jews, the humble and pious Mordecai is said to have caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate Shushan, covered with sackcloth, and therein to have read to the assembled afflicted Jews the words of our text.* "When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice. (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them."

These words seem pertinent to our present circumstances, and may lead us to consider the tribulations, which have come upon us, and the duties which in this season of calamity we owe to ourselves, our country, and our God.

The tribulations, which have come upon us, are many; but those, which stand foremost, demanding our special consideration on this occasion, are *war with a foreign power, and division among ourselves.*

Some of the evils and miseries of war were in some measure described in the morning's discourse. Let me now quote to you

* Patrick's comment. on Esth. 4.

the remarks of a pious commentator on the Bible, subjoined to some passages of scripture, which record the dreadful effects of war.

War is an appeal to the righteous Governor of the world, and should be undertaken and conducted upon such principles, and such only, as he approves." "In all cases the horrors of war must give pain to the feeling heart on every recollection; and can only be considered as evidences of the depravity of man, the power of satan and the just vengeance of God, who thus scourges a wicked world." "The promptitude of mankind to war lamentably proclaims the depravity of our nature and the influence, that the great murderer of bodies and souls has upon the minds of men ever in the determinations of senates and in the cabinets of kings. Nor can vain glorious commanders more delight in seeking renown, power or revenge, by the destruction of the human species, than their inferiors do, in listing under their banners, seconding their aims, and rushing upon danger and death, that they may attempt the slaughter of those who never injured, or even saw them!" "The annals of mankind form one continued narration of blood, shed in the most wanton and unnecessary manner, in pursuit of that bubble, honor, or in seeking to wrest the sword of vengeance from the hands of the Supreme Judge! The millions that have thus perished miserably hateful, and hating one another, exceed almost imagination." "Yet all the blood thus shed must be one day accounted for, as for murder, on whomsoever that load of guilt may fall. Surely then, war should be always considered as the last resource, a desperate remedy, never to be used when the welfare of the state can be otherwise secured! A righteous cause, a willingness for peace on reasonable terms, and a well grounded confidence in God, should be considered as the grand requisites, in the management of this direful appeal to the Supreme Arbiter of kings and nations."*

I will also cite the observations of *M. de Vattel in his law of nations*. He speaks of war as "but a wretched expedient against those, who spurn at justice and refuse the remonstrances of reason. It is in extremities only that a just and wise nation, or a good prince, has recourse to it. Those, who run to arms without necessity, are the scourges of the human race, barbarians, enemies to society and rebels to the law of nature, or rather to the common Father of mankind. Humanity is shocked at a sovereign, who lavishes the lives of his subjects, who exposes his people to the havoc and miseries of war, when they might enjoy an honorable and salutary peace. Besides the misfortunes, drawn on his subjects, for which he is accountable, he is guilty also of those, he carries amidst an innocent people. The slaughter of men, the

* Dr. Scott on Deut. 20 and 2 Chron. 14.

pillage of cities, the devastation of provinces, are *his* crimes. He is responsible to God and accountable to man, for every person that is killed. The violences, the crimes, the various disorders, attendant on the licentious tumult of arms, pollute his conscience and blacken his account, as he is the original author of them all."

In the holy scriptures, my brethren, we find written, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord." When we consider, that intentionally taking, or being purposely accessory to the taking away of the life of a fellow creature, by any unjustifiable means, and without a justifiable cause, is a violation of that plain law of God, "Thou shalt not kill;" when we consider that precept of the gospel, particularly addressed to soldiers, "Do violence to no man;" when we also consider, that other precept of the gospel, "neither be partaker of other men's sins," we infer, that any, who become volunteers in any unjustifiable war, if they know it to be such, partake of the sin of their leaders, and according to the spirit of God's law, are no other than murderers.

With respect to the right of subjects to judge of the lawfulness of war, I will cite the observations of Grotius, a writer of note, who has been considered by rulers of our own and other nations as valuable authority. Speaking of subjects being commanded to engage in war, he says, "*If commanded thereunto, as usually they are, then if it be evident to them, that the cause be unjust, they ought altogether to forbear, for that God is rather to be obeyed than man.* To justify subjects for refusing to execute the wicked commands of their princes, we have several examples in sacred story." "We conclude (he says) that where the subject doth not only doubt the lawfulness of the war, but is by very probable arguments induced to believe it unjust, especially if the war be *offensive* and not *defensive*, he is bound to abstain."

How far this nation will be suffered to inflict the calamities of war on the inhabitants of the Canadas and other territories of G. Britain on this continent; how much their armies may be suffered to injure us; and what evils their thousand ships of war may be suffered to inflict on our many absent and unprotected merchantmen, and on our almost defenceless sea coast, remains in futurity.

Division among ourselves is the other great tribulation, which in this season of calamity and war demands our consideration. That there is a great division among us as a people, on the subject of the present war, is well known. However well those on different sides of the question may mean, and though all have a right to think and judge for themselves, it is not to be supposed, where there is a great division, that the opinions of all are correct. In

the present case, there is great room and great occasion for the exercise of that candor, which is perfectly consistent with the freedom of opinion and speech, and with independence and firmness of conduct. It is a less evil for a country to be divided, than for all to be agreed in what is wrong. But union in that, which is right, is greatly to be desired. Division weakens and tends to the ruin of a community. A house, or kingdom divided against itself, if its division continue, cannot stand. If any good can come out of so bad a thing as division, it may be this, its rendering all parties watchful of, and guarded against encroachments upon our civil rights. The improvement to be made of the calamity of division is doubtless this, that we be duly humble on account of it, that we study mutual forbearance; that we each grant to others the liberty we claim for ourselves; that we "follow after the things, which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;" that we avoid bitterness and animosities, so that we may "not bite and devour one another, nor be devoured one of another." Division among a people is a great calamity in time of peace; in a time of war far greater; for it is no small thing for a people to carry on a war, even when they have the clearest cause, and are generally united in it.

On the subject of the present war there is a great division among our rulers, no wonder then, that there is among the people. The members of Congress from this State were as nearly equally divided as they could have been, unless some one of them had stood nenter. In the yeas and nays on the question of this war, we find the votes of New Hampshire as follow. In the Senate, for a declaration of war, Mr. Cutts; against a declaration of war, Mr. Gilman; one against one. In the House of Representatives, for a declaration of war, Messrs. Dinsmore, Harper and Hall; against a declaration of war, Messrs. Bartlett and Sullivan; two against three.

The division among our rulers appears great, from a view of the whole votes of Congress on the question of this war. From public statements it appears, that in the Senate 19 were for a declaration of war, and 13 against it; that in the House of Representatives 79 were for a declaration of war, and 49 against it.

The division of our rulers also appears great, when we view the votes of the following great sections of our country. From a view of the votes of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, it appears that of the members of Congress from those States, taken collectively, nearly five-sixths were for a declaration of war. From a view of the votes of Delaware, New-Jersey, New-York, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, it appears of that the members of

Congress from these States, taken collectively, two-thirds were against a declaration of war.*

In this season of public calamity, of division among ourselves, and war with a foreign power, the duties we owe to ourselves, our families, our country and our God, require that we cultivate candid, friendly and peaceable dispositions, one toward another; that we carefully look into the state of our public concerns; examine the measures of our rulers; and adhere strictly to our excellent constitutions, and to all the just laws of our country. To do

* It may be asked, why this great difference, between the Southern and Northern States, on this subject?

That many of the southern gentry, and that the great body of the French and Irish inhabitants, or residents, in the Southern States, have strong prejudices against G. Britain, and partialities toward France, is well known. The Northern States must be far the greater sufferers in this war. If large armies are raised, the greater number of men must be drawn from the Northern States. The duties on salt, and some other articles, must fall much more heavily on the Northern, than on the Southern States. The northern merchants, farmers, traders in lumber, mechanics, fishermen, sailors, &c. must be great sufferers, and many of them thrown almost out of employment; while the Southern States will suffer comparatively little.

The Southern States have few vessels, the Northern States many. The southern planters, who formerly shipped their produce in vessels belonging to the Northern States, can now ship in Spanish, Portuguese, or other foreign neutral vessels for good markets, or can sell, for ready money, to these vessels, at handsome prices; but the surplus produce of the Northern States must remain on hand, or be disposed of at great sacrifice, while such of the northern vessels as are abroad, are exposed to capture, and such of them as are at home, must lie useless at the wharves, or be put to the worse than useless employment, of privateering.

I believe, the great body of the friends of peace, deprecate a separation of the States, as an event, which would involve the ruin of this country; but it is a serious question, whether the measures of our present rulers have not a tendency to produce so dreadful an event? "We shrink from the separation of the States, as an event fraught with incalculable evils, and it is among our strongest objections to the present course of measures, that they have in our opinion, a very *dangerous* and *alarming* bearing, on such an event. If a separation of the States *ever* should take place, it will be, on some occasion, when one portion of the Country undertakes to controul, to regulate, and to *sacrifice* the interest of another; when a small and heated *Majority* in the Government, taking counsel of their passions, and not of their reason, contemptuously disregarding the interests, and perhaps stopping the mouths, of a large and respectable *Minority*, shall by hasty, rash, and ruinous measures, threaten to destroy essential rights, and lay waste the most important interests. It shall be our most fervent supplication to Heaven to avert, both the *event* and the *occasion*; and the Government may be assured, that the tie that binds us to the *Union*, will never be broken by us."—[*Memorial of the Rockingham Convention of the friends of peace.*]

this is incumbent on all, ministers and people; for "we are all embarked in one bottom, and must sink or swim together."

To examine, and to approve or disapprove the measures of rulers, as we believe them to be either justifiable or unjustifiable, are *rights* and *duties*, clear as the shining sun.

In the holy scriptures we find written, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Hence it plainly appears that civil government is a divine institution. But none of us can be so ignorant as to suppose that this, or any other passage of scripture, requires us to approve the measures of rulers, whether they are right or wrong. There is a plain distinction between *government*, and the *administrators* of government, though the terms are often used promiscuously. We are bound to be subject to *government*, and to rulers so far as they *rightly administer* it, for government is both an institution of God and an ordinance of man. But we are not bound to approve the measures of rulers if they wrongly administer government. If their commands are absolutely unlawful, we are bound to obey God rather, than man; for His is the highest of all powers.* If the absurd tyrannical doctrine, that people ought to approve of and comply with the measures of rulers, whether right or wrong; if such irrational and unscriptural doctrine had prevailed, this would not have become an independent nation. "Cases may occur, when it is the duty of private persons to point out the improper conduct of their rulers. Their country's good requires it, and their country's good should be their motive for doing it. But in performing this duty, which they owe to society, they should address the understandings, rather than the passions and prejudices, of their fellow citizens, or fellow subjects: they should reason, not rail: they should aim to give useful information, not to vilify the persons of their rulers. If their rulers be the patrons of principles, that are pernicious to society, or adopt measures of a dangerous tendency, their errors may be pointed out, and demonstrated, in decent and respectful language, without violating

* When Daniel knew, that the writing of the king, interdicting the worship of the true God, was signed, he notwithstanding "prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." When the king's command required the three pious friends of Daniel to worship an idol, they said, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods," &c. Dan. 3 & 6 ch. In a case where the commands of men were contrary to those of God, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5. 29.

the precept which says, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."*

Favored with a republican form of government, it is peculiarly our duty to examine the measures of those appointed to administer it, that we may know how to act; that they, who rule, may be continued in office, if they do well; or, if they do ill, when another constitutional opportunity of choosing arrives, that they may be left out, and others, who may do better, placed in their stead.

"As liberty is a blessing of inestimable value in society, it ought to be asserted with the utmost resolution and watchfulness, not only against open assaults, but every practice, that may secretly and silently impair it; yet with religious care neither to use it, nor unwarily assist others to use it for a cloak of maliciousness."† It was the magnanimous declaration of the independent and noble minded subjects of an European king, many years ago, "We, who are each of us as good, and who are altogether more powerful than you, promise obedience to your government, if YOU MAINTAIN OUR RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES; IF NOT, NOT."‡

One of the firmest and most able advocates of American liberty observes, "The formalities of a free, and the ends of a despotic state have often subsisted together. Thus deceived was the Republic of Rome." "Tho' cautioned against the projects of Cæsar, the smiles of his benignity deceived the Roman Commonwealth, till the increase of his power bid defiance to opposition. Celebrated for his generosity and magnificence, his complacency and compassion, the complaisant courtier made his way into the hearts of his countrymen. They would not believe, tho' admonished by the best of men and first of patriots, that the smiling Cæsar would sitch away their liberties, that a native—born and bred a Roman—would enslave his country—the land of his fathers—the land of his birth—the land of his posterity. But the ambitious Cæsar aiming at authority, and Cæsar armed and intoxicated with power, appear in very different characters. He who appeared with the mildness of a fine gentleman in his primæval state, in an advanced station conducted with the sternness of a tyrant. Opposed by a tribune of the people in taking money out of the public treasury against the laws, Cæsar with an army at his heels proclaimed, arms and laws do not flourish together. If you are not pleased (added the usurper) with what I am about, you have nothing to do but to withdraw. Indeed war will not bear much liberty of speech. When I say this I am departing from my own right. For you and all, I have found exciting a spirit of faction§

* President McKean. † Secker. ‡ Robertson's Hist. Charl. 5.

§ Regard for justice, and a manly assertion of rights, has too often been called *faction*.

against me, are at my disposal. Saying this, he approached the doors of the treasury, as the keys were not produced, he sent his workmen to break them open. This is the complaisant Caesar—renowned for his amiable qualities: by his easy address he deceived, and by his arts enslaved his countrymen—and prepared the way for a succeeding Nero to spoil and slaughter them.”*

Many of you doubtless remember the *truly republican principles* of the American Congress in 1774. I was then unborn; but I have read and admired their writings and cordially embraced their principles. I will quote some excellent passages from their votes and proceedings.

“In every case of opposition by a people to their rulers, or of one state to another, duty to Almighty God, the Creator of all, requires, that a true and impartial judgment be formed of the measures leading to such opposition; and of the causes by which it has been provoked, or can in any degree be justified: That neither affection on the one hand, nor resentment on the other, being permitted to give a wrong bias to reason, it may be enabled to take a dispassionate view of all the circumstances, and settle the public conduct on the solid foundations of wisdom and justice. From Councils thus tempered arise the surest hopes of the divine favor, the firmest encouragement to the parties engaged and the strongest recommendation of their cause to the rest of mankind”+ “Be assured that the happiness of a people inevitably depends on their liberty and their spirit to assert it.”‡ The enjoyment of liberty and even its support and preservation consists in every man’s being allowed to speak his thoughts and lay open his sentiments.”§ Speaking of “the rights without which a people cannot be free and happy” they say, “The last right we shall mention regards the freedom of the press. The importance of this consists, besides the advancement of truth, science and morality, and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officers are ashamed, or intimidated into more honorable and just modes of conducting affairs.”||

To these noble sentiments, of the patriotic republicans of 1774, let me subjoin the late patriotic and truly republican observations of his Hon. De Witt Clinton of New-York. “A state of war

* See Quincy’s observations, &c. published in 1774, from which the quotation from Dr. Robertson was also taken.

+ See “Extracts from the votes and proceedings of the American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, 5th Sept. 1774. Published by order of the Congress.” Boston edition, p. 29,

‡ The same, p. 48. § p. 46. || p. 43.

does not destroy or diminish the rights of the citizen to examine the conduct of public men and the tendency of public measures." He speaks also of the "freedom of investigation" as "the birth right and the boast of every American citizen."*

In the first sentence of a circular letter, addressed by the Continental Congress to their constituents in 1779, we find the following very just republican sentiment. "In Governments raised on the generous principles of equal liberty, the rulers of the state are the servants of the people, and not the masters of those from whom they derive authority." This being the case it is surely proper, that the people should examine, whether their rulers are faithful. Let me here add another quotation from a firm assertor of American liberty, a distinguished patriot of 1774, already repeatedly referred to. "Believe me, my countrymen, the labor of examining for ourselves, or great imposition, must be submitted to; there is no alternative, and unless we weigh and consider what we examine, little benefit will result from research."†

We clearly perceive, that ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUE REPUBLICANISM we have a *right*, and it is our duty, to examine the conduct of our rulers, and the tendency of their measures. We have each of us a right to inquire, examine, and judge for ourselves whether the present war is justifiable, or unjustifiable. To do this, is indeed our indispensable *moral duty*. If some of you have not carefully examined this subject already, let me entreat you to attend to it, as a duty you owe to yourselves, your families, your country, and your God. That you may take an impartial view of both sides of the great question respecting the present war; that you may candidly and clearly judge concerning it; I advise you to read with candor, deliberation, and care on the one side, President Madison's Manifesto and the report of the Committee of foreign relations in favor of a declaration of war.— I also advise you to read on the other side, with the same candor, deliberation, and care, an address of members of the House of Representatives, who opposed a declaration of war.‡ From an attentive perusal of these publications, on both sides, you may obtain far more correct information than can be had from common

* Charge to the Grand Jury of the city of New-York, July 6, 1812.

† Quincy's Observations &c. p. 27.

‡ I would now further advise a careful perusal and comparison of the publications of the Rockingham Conventions, at Brentwood, and Kingston; in which the statements and opinions of those, on different sides of this great question, in our Country, will be seen. I would also advise the reader to examine such other publications, as may throw light on this momentous subject.

report, the warm harangues of news paper writers,* or the short conversations of this, that, or the other neighbor. To obtain information and form an opinion on the important subject of the present war is a serious *moral duty*. The proclamation for this day's solemnities represents these United States as involved in war, by the injustice of a foreign power; and proposes to us, that we pray for a blessing on our arms. That we may know what to do, it is our serious duty to make up our minds on the *momentous question whether this war is justifiable or unjustifiable*; for we must take heed, that we do that, and only that, which is consistent with the dictates of our consciences, and the revealed will of God; for these lay upon us the greatest of all obligations.†

But let us remember that the duties we owe to ourselves, our families, our country, and our God, not only require, that we conscientiously maintain the privileges God has granted us, but that in view of our ill desert and the calamities, which have come upon us, we turn to the Lord our God, by unfeignedly repenting of, and forsaking our sins. Whatever judgments fall upon a people; whether inflicted by the immediate hand of God, or whether he suffers them to fall into the hand of man, sin is the great occasion, the procuring cause of all. That our country as a whole may return unto God, the several parts of it, and persons in it, must turn to Him. Let us, who form a part of it, look into ourselves, consider the number and aggravation of our sins and, through our great Mediator, seek divine grace to enable us to repent of our sins and turn from them by a thorough amendment. Let us possess and cultivate the meek and humble spirit of our ancestors. Their piety and virtue is worthy of remembrance and imitation. They appealed to God, that they came not into this wilderness to seek great things for

* This is not intended as a reflection on newspapers in general, but has special reference to such warm and passionate addresses to party feelings, and prejudices as tend to heat the temper, but not to enlighten the mind. A discerning reader may easily distinguish between such effusions—and plain statements of facts or sound reasonings. From newspapers the public derive much important information. Instead of reading only one paper it may be well for us to take papers on both sides, if we are able; and if not, it may be well for neighbors, who take different papers to exchange them regularly with each other. But it will be to little good purpose, that we read *any* unless we “weigh and consider” well what we read.

† From the manner in which the writer had uniformly spoken in public concerning the present war, his *hearers* could have no doubts, as to his sentiments, on this subject. To the *reader* he explicitly declares, that he believes this war to be, on the part of this nation unjust, unnecessary, and highly offensive to God.

themselves, but for the sake of a poor and quiet life." They solemnly entered into covenant with God to be his people, and though often corrected and cast down, they were not utterly forsaken. Let us return to the God of our fathers, and be obedient unto his voice, and he will not forsake us, neither destroy us, nor forget the covenant of our fathers. But if we will not be instructed and amend, the evils, which have come upon us, are but the beginning of sorrows. It is our incumbent duty to pray earnestly for forgiveness and divine favor, nor can we reasonably hope for mercy, unless we humbly and penitently ask it. And in vain do we fast or pray, unless we form sincere resolutions of amendment, and carry these resolutions into effect.

Now we are in tribulation, and all these things have come upon us, let us consider our ways and turn unto the Lord. While his judgments are abroad in the earth and falling heavily on us, if we will learn righteousness and be obedient to the voice of God, he will turn to us; the Lord of hosts will be with us; the God of Jacob will defend us; we shall have the testimony of our own consciences to cheer us; and need not fear what man can do unto us. Amen.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE PROPRIETY OF PREACHING OCCASIONALLY ON
POLITICAL SUBJECTS.

THE office of gospel ministers does not preclude them from the common privileges of citizens. They are not unacquainted with the rights, which our constitutions engage to them as well, as to other classes of the community. If, in common times, some of them have not voted at the elections of general and state officers, and if they have said less than some others, they have probably read and thought as much, and have obtained as correct information, and have felt as sincere concern for the prosperity of their Country, as have some, who wish them to be silent on these subjects. There are times, when it is evidently the duty of ministers of the gospel, to call the attention of their people to public affairs. This observation is made, not so much on account of any thing said in the preceding sermons, as with reference to the general subject of preaching occasionally on political concerns; a subject much agitated, or rather, which greatly agitates, at the present day.

It is the law of our Creator, that we should fear Him, and keep his commandments *always*. As individuals, members of families,

neighbors, or members of public society, one and the same rule is given to us. We are required in our several relations and conditions, and in all our transactions, to be governed by a fixed and habitual principle of duty to God. It is therefore a great error, that "religion and politics should have nothing to do with each other." That in too many instances they *have* nothing to do with each other, we have much reason to fear; but that every political act ought to be in conformity, to the principles of religion, and may justly be reproved by the ministers of religion if it is not, cannot reasonably be doubted. "We may be honest or dishonest, faithful or unfaithful, in our relations to the state, as well as to private connexions. Political duties are therefore moral duties. What is politically right is morally right, what is politically wrong is morally wrong. Christian ministers and those with whom they are nearly connected have rights of persons, liberty and sometimes property, which the fate of the government and country may deeply affect." "Till within a few years it has been generally represented as a merit in the Clergy to interest themselves in their country's cause; it has been insisted particularly by some of the warmest leaders in our late revolution that this order of men ought to throw their weight into the political scale; and are under a moral and religious, as well as civil obligation to warn the people of the dangers, which threaten their liberty and happiness." On this subject, "the Provincial Congress (of a New England State) in 1774, addressed a circular letter to the ministers of the gospel."

"Provincial Congress, Dec. 6, 1774. It was resolved that the following letter be addressed to the several ministers of the gospel throughout this province.

"Rev. Sir, We cannot but acknowledge the goodness of Heaven in constantly supplying us with Ministers of the gospel, whose concern has been the temporal and spiritual happiness of this people. In a day like this, when all the friends of civil and religious freedom are exerting themselves, to deliver this country from its present calamities, we cannot but place great hopes in an order of men, who have ever distinguished themselves in their country's cause, and do therefore recommend to the ministers of the gospel in the several towns and other places in this colony, that they assist in avoiding that dreadful slavery, with which we are threatened."*

No class of citizens have been more uniform, in their political sentiments, than ministers of the gospel. They have not changed with the times. With few exceptions, they have been, and still

* See the preceding quotations in President Kirkland's sermon delivered May 9, 1793. See also Gordon's History of the Revolution.

are, friends and advocates of rational liberty, true republicanism, and good government; and if they believed the present war to be just and necessary, no class of citizens would more zealously advocate it.

It has been observed, that there are times, when it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to call the attention of their people to public affairs. There are occasions, which require, and scripture, precepts and examples, which authorize it.

Christ says, "Search the scriptures." John 5. 39. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," &c. 2 Tim. 3. 16. "Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2. 15.

In the scriptures it is said, when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn." Prov. 29. 2. The Scriptures speak of "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Ch. 12. 32. They also speak of such as cause the people to err. "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." Isaiah 3. 12. Shall not ministers occasionally address their people concerning such different characters as are described in scripture? Nehemiah, on account of the general cry of the people, rebuked the rulers themselves, when they oppressed the people. "Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them." Neh. 5. 7. In the 33d ch. of Ezekiel the duty of a watchman in a time of public calamity is pointed out. "If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him: but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel," &c.

Much of Jeremiah's preaching related to the political as well, as spiritual state of the Jews, and the nations around them. He was often called to address those, who differed from him in opinion. His commission was, "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dis-

mayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them." Jer. 1. 17.

Jeremiah's roll, written in the reign of Jehoiakim, related to national sins and calamities. This roll Jeremiah directed Baruch to read in public. "Go thou and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house upon the fasting day : and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way : for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people." Jer. 36. 6, 7.

The reader is desired to examine the prophecy of Zephaniah. Several passages in that book as well as, various other passages in the old testament, are here omitted for the sake of brevity.

To preach the doctrine of Christ's expiatory sufferings and death on the cross, is a most important duty of the christian minister. There are also other subjects, on which christian ministers should occasionally preach. Therefore the same Apostle, who says in his epistle to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," in another epistle, had occasion to write concerning rulers and civil government. In his epistle to the Romans, 13 ch. he says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain ; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake," &c. Is civil government an ordinance of God, and must ministers say nothing concerning it ? Are the powers of government ordained of God, and is it not the duty of ministers, to impress on the minds of the people, especially of an elective government, the great importance, the solemn duty, of vesting these powers in the hands of men, who will conscientiously fulfil the great ends of government, which the Apostle has pointed out ; men, who will not abuse these powers ; who will not prove a terror to good works, but will be the ministers of God for good, so that they who do good shall have praise of the same ; men, who will prove a terror only to the evil, that they which do evil may be afraid ; men, who will not resist the powers, charters or constitutions, by which they ought to be ruled as well as to rule ; so that no subject shall have occasion to resist their authority, as contrary to the laws of

God! Since we must be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake, is it not the duty of gospel ministers to admonish the people, that they choose *not* for rulers those, who "fear not God nor regard man;" Luke 18. 4. but that they "provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them." Exod. 18. 21; men who will enact and execute such laws as are consistent with God's laws, that so the people may conscientiously be subject to them?

The Apostle Peter says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." 1 Pet. 2. 13, &c. As civil government is an ordinance both of God and man, it is certainly the duty of the ministers of religion, to urge the people to give their suffrages for such men, and only for such to rule over them, as they have reason to believe will manifest by a wise and religious administration of government, that they are actually sent of God for the punishment of evil doers and the praise of them that do well. It is certainly proper, that the people should be persuaded *not* to use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness; but to use it as the servants of God, as those who knew they must give an account to him how they use it. God has committed most precious privileges to this people. O that they would consider that they must be answerable to Him if they abuse, or neglect to improve them! Privileges involve duties, and bring great responsibility on those to whom they are committed.

The Apostle Paul says, "I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. An important reason for prayers, &c. for those in authority is here given, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Are the ministers of religion exhorted to speak unto the Most High God on these important subjects, and must we not be allowed to speak concerning them to our fellow men?

With reference not only to the final judgment, but to the destruction of the temple and *city* of Jerusalem, Christ said, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13. 37. With reference not only to spiritual but to temporal and national calamities, Jesus "when he was come near beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19. 41, 42, &c.

The precepts and examples of Prophets, and Apostles, and of Christ himself clearly shew, that it is the duty of gospel ministers, on some occasions to address the people on political subjects.

These observations will be concluded, with a few extracts from a sermon, delivered before the Convention of the Clergy of Massachusetts, in 1796, by Dr. Belknap, who was distinguished as a minister, and whose name is familiar to us, as the historian of New-Hampshire.

"There is a monopolizing spirit in some politicians, which would exclude clergymen from all attention to matters of state and government; which would prohibit us from bringing political subjects into the pulpit, and even threaten us with the loss of our livings if we move at all in the political sphere. But my brethren, I consider politics as intimately con-

nected with morality, and both with religion. If the political character of a people is bad, their morals are equally bad, and their religion is good for nothing. The same man who appears in the character of a politician, is also a subject of moral government, and a candidate for immortality. Therefore if he act right or wrong as a politician, he acts equally right or wrong as a subject of God's moral government; his character as a politician will be brought into the grand review at the last day, and his future state will be determined accordingly. This doctrine I am sensible is not agreeable to the practice of some men, who act with a tolerable regard to principles of morality in their common business; but when they get into a political body, relax their ideas of morality, and endeavor to carry a point by any means whatever. Against such an idea of politics, I think it my duty to protest; for I believe that honesty is the best policy, both in private and public life.

"Had the Apostles lived in these days, and among us, who have the privilege of choosing our own rulers, I have no doubt that they would have exhorted us to exercise our privileges by none but honest and lawful means. They would have advised the people to carry the principles of Christian morality to a town meeting as well as to the exchange. They would have advised legislators to carry the same principles to the senate and house of assembly; they would have advised executive and judicial officers to carry the same principles to the bar, to the bench, to the council-board, and to the Governor's chair. They would have advised us to be consistent and uniform in our regards to God and man, in every situation, private or public; and this is the duty of gospel ministers.

"It is very strange that we may not preach on the same subjects which are recommended to us as subjects of prayer. In the annual proclamations for fasts and thanksgivings we are exhorted to pray and give thanks on a great variety of political subjects, foreign and domestic. And what good reason can be given why these same subjects should not be discoursed on, as well as prayed over? It is expected, that we bring them into the pulpit in our prayers, and it is by some people highly resented if we do not. When we have them in our mind as proper subjects for devotion, why should we not speak and discourse on them for the instruction of our hearers? Must we make an address to God on political subjects, and may we not make an address to our brethren on the same subjects."

"But 'there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, though their teeth are as swords!' And how liberal are some tongues, some pens, and some presses, with their abuse, when we appear warm and zealous in the cause of our country! When we speak or write in support of its liberties, its constitution, its peace and its honor, we are stigmatized as busy-bodies, as tools of a party, as meddling with what does not belong to us, and usurping authority over our brethren.

"Whatever may be the views of those who are of a different opinion from me, respecting this matter, yet I consider their principle, that the clergy have no right to meddle with politics, and their endeavor to stop our mouths, as 'pregnant with mischief,' tending to keep the people in ignorance, and exposing them to be misled by those who would always pretend that the people shall govern, provided that they shall govern the people."

"The time has been when some of these same persons were very fond of engaging the clergy in politics, encouraging them to write and preach, or, to use a phrase of their own, 'blow the trumpet,' in defence of the liberties of their country. But, alas, how changed, how fallen! From such politicians, and such patriots, the good Lord deliver us!"

THE END.